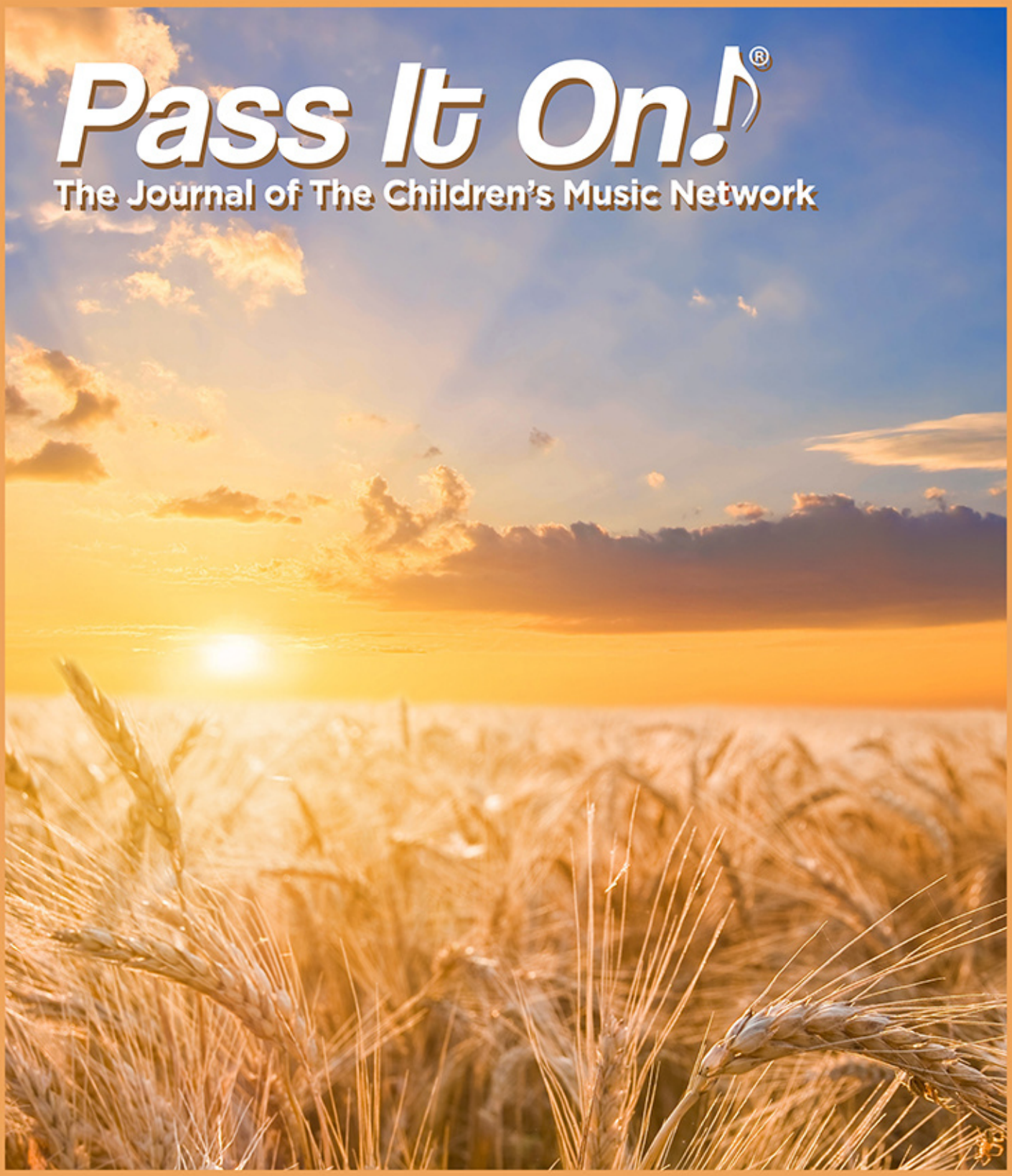
Pass It On!®

The Journal of The Children's Music Network



Fall 2022 | Issue #99

A Bountiful Harvest

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A Bountiful Harvest

Yeast to Make the Bread Rise

Folklorists, moldy or not, are watchers; their passion is to observe what people actually do and say, and then to think about it. And they often get particularly interested in those things people do and say that have lasted a long time through many, many repetitions and perhaps become anonymous. Page 3.

Land Acknowledgements and Beyond

Territory acknowledgement is a way that people insert an awareness of Indigenous presence and land rights in everyday life. All settlers, including recent arrivants, have a responsibility to consider what it means to acknowledge the history and legacy of colonialism. Page 12.

A Place to Grow

I wasn't so much drawn to the Children's Music Network as I was born into it. I know that music has a powerful positive effect on the lives of children because I've watched my father bring joy to children and families at his shows for my entire life. Page 18.

Otoño (Autumn)

"This song was written during a preschool music class when we were talking about the seasons, and I would name all the sounds we hear during the fall. We then started to act like leaves, and I found the perfect chorus for this song." Page 20.

Let Your Little Light Shine

CMN recently held a Community Singing Workshop with panelists Joanie Calem, Jane Sapp, and Sally Rogers. The discussion turned to the children's song "This Little Light of Mine" as an example of a song that everyone knows and can sing. Page 23.

Fall Fun Song

"I was inspired by my love of fall and how it makes me feel. We can express fall with the language of colors, changing of the weather, and the wonderful and cool activities that fall brings." Page 26.

Yeast to Make the Bread Rise

Keynote Address to CMN's 1999 National Gathering

by Bess Lomax Hawes

In October 1999, at the Children's Music Network National Gathering in Petaluma, California, well-known folklorist Bess Lomax Hawes was the invited keynote speaker. Her address was enthusiastically received, and many members suggested that CMN publish it. We were honored that Mrs. Hawes gave us permission to do so, believing that it beautifully embodies CMN's mission in the world of children's music, and the address was offered to members as a separate publication. It is reprinted here in Pass It On! *at the suggestion of member and 2019 Magic Penny recipient Nancy Schimmel, who also kindly provided permission to republish the lyrics to "The Pet Song," written by her mother, Malvina Reynolds. Please enjoy this gift from CMN's roots, a reflection on the enduring power of folklore in our lives.*

I feel particularly honored to have been invited to address you since it's obvious to me that everyone here is far more expert than I in the area of children's music, for everyone in the Children's Music Network actively makes music for and/or with children. And for some thirty years, I haven't—except for the all-too-occasional get-together with a grandchild. So everything I know is truly out of date and old hat, and I am perhaps best described as a moldy fig even amongst folklorists.

Now, folklorists, moldy or not, are watchers; their passion is to observe what people actually do and say, and then to think about it. And they often get particularly interested in those things people do and say that have lasted a long time through many, many repetitions and perhaps become anonymous. Such shared information tends to collect around people (sometimes called "folk") who also share a common feature like language or occupation or

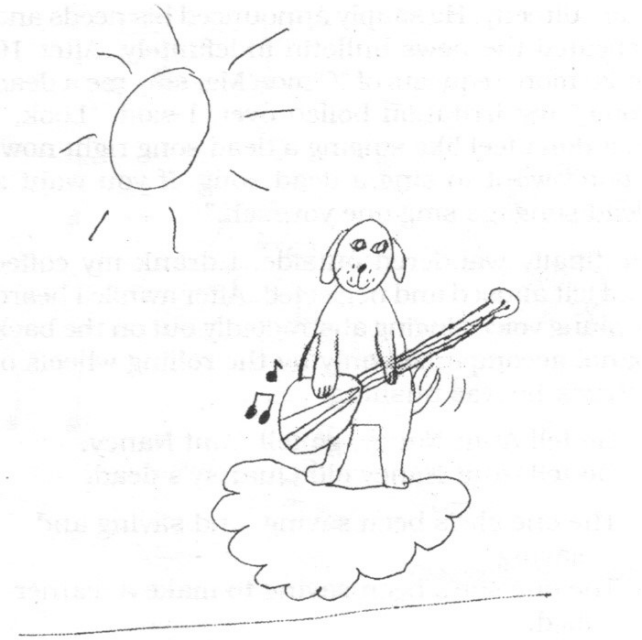
religion. Sometimes folk groups use such common knowledge (or lore) to express their special group identities. A folk group can be as small as a family or as big as a nation, though smallness is much more common.

It's a nice life, being a folklorist—you get to think about such interesting things, and I have absolutely loved it. But even folklorists don't get to spend all their time being folklorists. Like everybody else in the world they have to wash the dishes and the baby and the dog, and they have to go get the mail and answer the phone and put up the groceries. And I hope you will not be shocked if I tell you that during such ever-present energy-consuming activities lots of folklorists don't think about their profession for one split second.

The time when folklorists try to get at least a vaguely professional grasp on what has been going on seems to come along after the main action. By way of illustration, let me tell you about something that happened to me, during my folkloric salad days.

My husband and I were living in Topanga, California, at the time, along with our three children, then aged about seven and a half, six, and five. It was an active bunch. We were also very broke and were living in a ridiculously small house, probably originally built for a weekend getaway cottage. My husband and I slept in the big bed on the side porch, the three children in bunk beds in the single bedroom. There was a small living room, a minute kitchen, and a bath with only a shower stall. The family grouping was further adorned by the presence of a dog named Quartsy—whom we had bargained for at a local swapping fair by trading several quarts of my homemade applesauce for one delightful puppy, and thus the name Quartsy.

When I took Quartsy to the local vet for a checkup, he looked sober. We had been too naive to insist on any kind of medical record, and the vet said he didn't think our puppy had had the right shots. I suspect he knew at the time that she was coming down with distemper but hoped he could forestall it. His pills and our earnest administration of them didn't seem to help, and Quartsy just got sicker and sicker. And then my husband got a week-long job out of state and had to leave home for several days. We needed the work and the money, and he had to go.



Drawing by Alexandra Lewis

Well. Early one evening, then, I found myself with a dying dog, three young and passionately interested children, and no backup. Quartsy began to have convulsions, and I finally locked her in the bathroom, afraid that in her spasms she might bite someone. Finally, she quieted down. I looked timorously at her—she was obviously dead—and went into the bedroom and told the children that Quartsy had died, and now it was time for all of us to go to bed. Which it was—and late, too. I kept thinking I had to keep life moving along in as ordinary a routine as possible. The children were all of them cheerful and very excited. They carefully inspected what they could see of Quartsy—she was lying covered by a towel on the bathroom floor—then brushed their teeth, put on their pajamas and went to bed. I read a story and sang each one a song. There was only one variation in the usual routine. The middle child—the six-year-old girl—bounced into bed, pulled up the covers, and said that she wanted everybody's animals to sleep with. I said incredulously, "What?" She repeated her

announcement—it wasn't a request—and then I saw that the other two (the older and the younger) were picking up their own every-night-clutched-to-the-bosom stuffed animals, four or five apiece, and taking them over to their sister without any signs of reluctance, as though it were a standard part of the nightly routine. She went to sleep that night under a small mountain of stuffed toys. Nobody else had any at all. Nobody seemed to mind.

During the night I was waked up by my older daughter, who said that she had been having bad dreams about how I had died. My husband was away, and I didn't feel all that good myself, so I took her in the big bed, and we slept together soundly the rest of the night through. There was no word at all from the youngest child.

Next day was a school day. I spent a good deal of time wondering what should I do now—get somebody to come and disappear the dog while the children were away, wait till they got home to do it, or what. Finally, I decided that fate had brought it about that this was the time for us as a family to learn about death in its proper context: when it actually had happened. So when the children came home after school, I announced that we would be having a funeral. We were going to bury Quartsy up the hill behind our house, where I had already dug a shallow grave in a place where we could go and visit her, and we should pick some flowers and think of nice things to say to each other about what a fine dog she was.

The ceremony went off without a hitch. We made a straggly procession up the hill, me carrying Quartsy who kept the bathroom towel as a shroud. We each threw a handful of dirt on her as she lay in the hole, and after I had filled in with the shovel, we patted it all down and sprinkled the flowers over her. The children were thrilled and happily proposed that we go down and make a picnic for supper and come back and eat it at the graveside. But by this time I had about had it. I was myself grieved over the dog, and frankly I was beginning to wonder if all our three charming children were some kind of undiscovered monsters. Nobody had seemed the least bit sad at any time during the entire episode, just extremely interested and somewhat overstimulated. And the idea of a merry picnic at the grave simply revolted me. I said absolutely not, and we all trailed back down the hill.

I can't remember any more if the former night's procedure with the animals was repeated. I rather think they were left in whomever's bed they were in at bedtime. My older daughter again had worrisome dreams about my survival, and again we slept together except I didn't sleep very well this time.

The next morning, a Saturday, my five-year-old son appeared—all dressed, shiny, and cheerful—ate a hearty breakfast, and then said, "Hey Ma, sing me a dead song." Previously he had made no comment whatever about the dog or the funeral or any of the adventures we had been having; he had just come along serenely for the ride, so to say, watching what was going on.

I said, "I don't want to sing a dead song." I hadn't even had my coffee yet. But my son, was—and still is, for that matter—a perseverator. It has always been hard for him to let go of or to change a perfectly good plan; sometimes I think he never has; he just moves things around a little or maybe puts a particular problem on the back burner for a while. This makes for a strong and efficient grown-up. But at the age of five he handled things more directly. He simply announced his needs and repeated the news bulletin indefinitely. After ten or twenty more requests of "C'mon Ma, sing me a dead song," my irritation boiled over.

I said, "Look, I just don't feel like singing a dead song right now. I don't want to sing a dead song. If you want a dead song, go sing one yourself."

He finally wandered outside. I drank my coffee and felt abused and neglected. After a while I heard a young voice singing abstractedly out on the back patio, accompanied only by the rolling wheels of a truck he was pushing:

> Go tell Aunt Nancy, go tell Aunt Nancy,
> Go tell Aunt Nancy old Quartsy's dead.
>
> The one she's been saving, and saving and saving
> The one she's been saving to make a feather bed.
>
> She died last Friday, she died last Friday,
> She died last Friday with an aching in her head.

I have to say that my reaction was, *Well, thank goodness he's thought one up*. As the day went on, so did our usual life. We went on our weekly Saturday expedition to the market and the public library. None of the children brought up the subject of the dog or the funeral or anything at that time—they did in a few days—but basically life resumed its old pace and pattern, except that in the following weeks I began to notice my son was singing quite a large number of dead songs. It got kind of overwhelming.

He sang,

> Hush, little baby, don't you cry,
> You know old Quartsy's bound to die.
> All my trials, Lord, soon be over.
>
> Jordan's River is chilly and cold ...

He sang,

> Who killed old Quartsy? Who killed old Quartsy?
> I said the sparrow with my little bow and arrow,
> It was I, oh, it was I.
>
> Who dug his grave? Who dug his grave?
> I said the snake, with my little spade and rake,
> It was I, oh it was I.

And he sang,

> Quartsy died on Sunday, on Sunday, on Sunday,
> Quartsy died on Sunday when the weather was good.
>
> We buried her on Sunday, on Sunday, on Sunday,
> We buried her on Sunday when the weather was good.

And he sang,

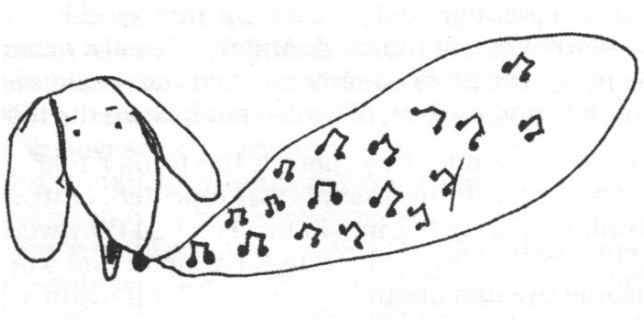
> Soon one morning death came a-creeping in the room. (3X)
> Oh my Lord, oh my Lord, what shall I do to be saved?
>
> Well, death done been here, took my Quartsy and gone. (3X)
> Oh my Lord, oh my Lord, what shall I do to be saved?

And he sang,

> I had an old dog, and his name was Quartsy,
> And I bet you five dollars he's a good dog too.
> Come on Quartsy, you good dog you. (2X)
>
> When Quartsy died, he died so hard
> That he shook the ground in my backyard…

It seemed to be endless. I began to worry after a while. For heaven's sake, how many dead songs was he going to come up with? Admittedly his poetic standards were not terribly refined. He just substituted the dog's name for any deceased person or thing mentioned in a song, regardless of rhyme or meter or even sense, and sang on away. And how many songs about death did he know, anyway? I had had absolutely no idea the extent of his repertory of songs about morbidity. I got kind of embarrassed; admittedly I had sung all those songs around the place, but I wasn't teaching them to the children, I was just singing what came into my head, and there are lots of traditional and nontraditional songs about death, if you stop and think about it.

I thought a lot about the whole episode. For one thing, the way that the three different children (of three different ages, remember) had chosen to deal with the dog's passing struck me particularly. The older child had taken the possibility of death and laid it on me (I suspect to shield herself from the even more terrifying notion that she herself could die). The six-year-old had found a different solution, by calling on all the available animals to protect her, in return I suppose for giving them a sociable and comfortable warm bed to sleep in—a very fair arrangement, I thought.



Drawing by Diana Lestz

In another way of putting it, the older child had expressed her fears through another person, the second through things that she could handle and manipulate, while the third had tried to deal with the desperately un-understandable event symbolically, through language. I began to realize that, of the three, my young son had had the least practice in talking about something so totally unfamiliar and bizarre as death, and that's probably why he didn't ever say anything much. The girls had chattered on a good bit, but they were older and could read, and he didn't know the proper technical terms. The songs allowed him to talk about dying and death and funerals in an appropriate and dignified way.

And as he sang on and on and on (quite cheerfully, by way; there was no tragic note in his dead songs as far as I could tell), I wondered if he wasn't also, subliminally sort of, absorbing the truly vital message that experience as well as great literature tells us about death, that it comes to everybody and everything—gray geese and mamas and cock robins and Old Rogers and Old Blues and Quartsys too. I gradually began to feel less peculiar about my children knowing all these funny old-timey songs. Maybe they formed a kind of reference library to be called upon when needed. The general folksong repertory has had to be important to the general run of singers, otherwise they would not have been remembered so long.

And that is pretty much the way everyone's traditional repertory of folklore works. It just sits there and waits until you want to use it. Most of us don't believe we have a folklore repertory, but everyone does, truly. Some people may have larger and more complex repertories than others, but everybody knows far more than they believe they do. Just in children's lore, I'm talking about jump rope rhymes, family sayings, birthday-party formulae, riddles, silly poems you say to children, traditional answers to traditional statements ("Tell me a story, Mama." "All right, I'll tell you a story about Jack-a-ma-nory, and now my story's begun; I'll tell you another about Jack and his brother, and now my story is done." Oh, I used to hate that one!), counting-out rhymes, lullabies—the little or big things that decorate communication and life and make experiences amusing and memorable, sometimes even educational.

My husband's stepfather, long since gone, had a classic New England style of humor and discourse, and one of his favorite ploys was to insist that after a big family dinner, everyone must go out for a walk together. "We need to stimulate the phagocytes," he would say, beaming and rubbing his hands together and swinging the littlest child up to his shoulder. And it was such a splendid and energetic thing to say that I believe everyone in the family has echoed him ever since. It's just that dumb thing you say when you go out for a walk—you're going to go stimulate the old phagocytes. Frankly, it was only while I was writing out this talk that it suddenly occurred to me that I really ought to get the dictionary and see if there was any such thing as a phagocyte anyway. It had always had a sort of Lewis Carroll "slithy toves" feeling to me. But by gum, there it was in the old Webster's: "phagocyte: any leukocyte active in ingesting and destroying waste and harmful material, bacteria, etc., in the blood or tissues of the body." Obviously phagocytes are worthy items to be stimulated, and I'm glad to know that, after all these years.

But in a sense it didn't really matter. It was just one of those little items of apparent inconsequence that stick in your mind and you rarely know they are there until they fit in with something else that's going on. That's how my son's dead songs worked. He didn't, I suspect, know they were about death until he needed them and called on them in that context. And by gum, checking back through his little mental file cabinet, there they were, ready to be called for.

You know, it's only relatively recently anyway that adults began to write special children's literature, songs for children, and so forth. In a biography of the limerick maker Edward Lear, I was surprised to find that he and Lewis Carroll were not only contemporaries, they were regarded as radical pioneers in the field of children's literature. The Grimm stories were originally known as "household tales," not fairytales, and they were told not just to children but to whoever happened to be around. Most children didn't have a special repertoire all for themselves, they just picked up whatever poetry, song, and story they heard grown-ups tell other grown-ups Then, whether they fully comprehended them or not, they would tuck them away for future inspection.

Or for their own artistic raw materials. A very great many so-called children's game rhymes and songs, ring plays, and play party dances are childhood reworkings of adult items. I refer you to the great series of children's traditional poetry and song collected by Iona and Peter Opie in Great Britain, or to W.W. Newell's early twentieth-century *Games and Songs of American School Children*, or to the more contemporary *Step It Down* and *Brown Girl in the Ring*, two collections of children's lore I had something to do with. If you can get hold of any of these volumes, you can discover that the century-long histories of such yeasty items as "London Bridge," "Little Sally Walker," "Eenie Meenie Miney Mo," "Who Killed Cock Robin," and others are still incomplete, still full of interest, and still complicated. And bear in mind that

with folk songs of this kind you're dealing with poetry and melody that have had true durability—they've stayed around just by being remembered, for people don't usually teach them to other people, they just learn them.

For one of the magical things about learning is that sometimes when the learner and the thing to be learned are in exact alignment—like the stars on their courses—their joining is instantaneous. The learner simply gets it all at once and feels they have known it always. I have never interviewed anyone who could remember exactly when they learned the song "Happy Birthday to You." It has always just been there. You hear it once and then—clomp!—you know it.

A number of years ago I learned a song written by Malvina Reynolds, whose extraordinary work for children I believe you will be celebrating later in this meeting.*[1] It was called "The Pets," and most of you probably know it. This is the way I remember it; I haven't checked it with an official text:

The Pets
music and lyrics by Malvina Reynolds
© 1961 Schroder Music

I had a doggy, his name was Do-lally,
Oh doggy Do-lally, so faithful and true.
He lived upon clod-hoppers, golly-whoppers, and soda poppers,
And that makes him hop around like grasshoppers do.

I have a kitty, her name is Miss Feedlefaddle,
Oh fit Feedle-faddle, foot-Feedle-faddle, fair as a rose.
She lives upon livers and mousy-comehithers,
And that's why she slithers wherever she goes.

I have a birdie, his name is MacMurdie,
Oh wing feather and top feather and tail feather so bright.
He lives upon prinkles and pink periwinkles,
And that's why he twinkles from morning till night.

I have a donkey, his name is old Klonkey,
Oh, clip-cloppety, trip-troppety all over town.
He lives upon thistles and tin penny whistles,
And that's why he whoops like a merry-go-round.

I have a barnacle, his name is McGonigle,
Oh, slip-slickery, slush-suckery under my boat.
He lives upon borings of old teakwood floorings,
And when he is snoring, you can't sing a note.

Well, I heard Pete Seeger sing this enchanting song, and I moved all kinds of mountains to get the words (it was new at the time), and I taught it to a class of young women I had in a folksong repertory course out in the San Fernando Valley. It was spring, and we were meeting at one of the women's houses, and the children who came with their mothers were playing around on the swings and slides in the backyard where we were sitting. They had been carefully instructed not to bother us, and they never did. Actually, they paid no attention to us whatever, they just swung and slid and dug in the sandpile.

In the meantime I was informing their mothers that I was going to teach them a new children's song, but I did wonder if it might not tum out to be a song that, though ostensibly for children, would actually be enjoyed more by grownups than its intended audience. It seemed to me awfully complex in structure for kids and awfully full of long words, mouth-filling and delightful as they were. Anyway, I mentioned casually to the class that if anybody got any insights on how their children liked the pets song, I'd really enjoy hearing about it. We sang it through three or four times, along with some other songs, and packed up to go home.

Drawing by Matt Newton

A month or so later I got this letter—well, now I can't lay hands on it, but sooner or later, as my sister used to say, it'll wash to the surface—and I've never in the thirty years or so since forgotten what it said anyway. It said that her son, aged around seven or eight, had been playing in the yard during the class and on the way home in the back seat of the family car had casually begun to sing the pet song, and he had made it all the way through all the verses. It made her feel terribly inferior, because she couldn't remember more than the first few lines. (He was right ready to learn it, you see, and—clomp!—he got it all at one go.)

Furthermore, she said, in the next several weeks he had come up with two stanzas of his own. One went like this:

> I have a squirrel, her name it is Pearl,
> Oh squirly, oh whirly with a long bushy tail.
> She lives upon walnuts and fat nuts and tall nuts,
> And in summertime, she dances in the trees.

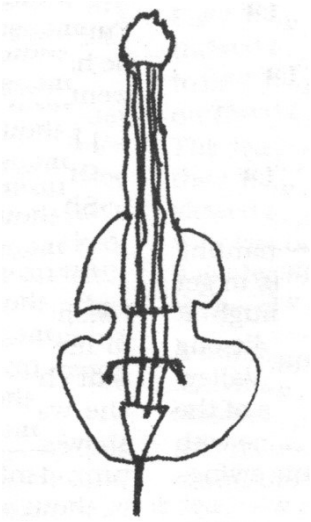
I wish I could have shown this to Malvina. It seems to me those four lines would have assured her that she had truly hit a home run to the children she was singing for. At least this young man showed his recognition of a strong poetic structure; of internal and external rhyme schemes; and of thoughtful, colorful language; and finally he demonstrated his own independent authority to abandon all the rules when critical aesthetic issues arose. If he wanted to say "dances in the trees," he could ignore the rhyme scheme and just say it.

His second production was:

> I have a sister, her name is Miss Blister,
> Oh, sister, oh Blister, I can't say a word.
> She gets in my room and she pulls down my toys,
> She is a big pest, but I now close my door.

Here we find our poet utilizing the artistic structures available to him for purposes of protest. Very few experienced songwriters have not done the same thing. Almost all the famous protest songs are based on other widely known tunes and/or verses, and thus they carry with them a double or triple emotional weight. A song that I've often sung, "Charlie and the MTA," was preceded by "The New York Subway That Never Returned," "The [Railroad] Train That Never Returned," and "The Ship That Had Never Returned"—all well-known and different songs, all widely sung. Each tragedy, then, carried extra power stemming from the previous versions.

What I'm saying here is that it is the contents of one's head that produce poetry, sympathy, affection, understanding, comprehension, creativity. As parents and as teachers and as people who simply exist along with our young on the same planet, it is crucial for us to see to it that our children's heads have available to them the best we have ourselves learned —structurally, poetically, ethically, in all kinds of ways. As I've already pointed out, these patterns and ideas are often absorbed before they are ever obviously needed or ever obviously taught or even understood. It is all the more critical, then, that they be patterns and ideas that are sufficiently flexible and strong that our children can grow within them.



Drawing by Kacie Mott

As I said to begin with, I am not raising children today, and the outlook is awfully different from the time when I was. It is desperately tragic that our children's heads are being stuffed with violence, sexism, racism, and other abominations by the general surrounding culture. So I want you to be confident that, though there isn't any magical repertoire that will combat this, the truly wonderful thing is that every child will eventually choose what he or she remembers according to personal preferences, need, the available cultural repertoire. Here is where grown-ups do an essential job—making sure that all children get exposed to the best—whether of folk music or grand opera or Shakespeare or jazz or Longfellow poems. And here is where you people in CMN appear on the front line, brave and devoted enough to take on the responsibility of providing new, intriguing, and previously unexplored nourishment for our children.

They deserve the best, and after we've done all we can to get it to them, we then must trust to the process of learning itself, for we know that above all, the human brain is elastic, capable of enormous feats of understanding and judgment. So we must continue confidently presenting our children with the kind, the intelligent, the humorous, the yeasty, and the beautiful, in the sure knowledge that there will eventually be little or no room in their heads for their opposites.

** Mrs. Hawes is referring to CMN's Magic Penny Award[2], given in recognition of lifetime achievement in the area of children's music. Inaugurated in October 1999 at the CMN national gathering at which Mrs. Hawes delivered this keynote address, it was given posthumously to Malvina Reynolds, whose song, "Magic Penny," inspired the name of the award. See the Spring 2000 issue[3] of* Pass It On! *for a tribute to Malvina Reynolds.*

See the Winter 1999 issue[4] of Pass It On! *for an interview with Bess Lomax Hawes.*

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1. https://journal.childrensmusic.org/pass-it-on/yeast-to-make-the-bread-rise#footnote1
2. https://childrensmusic.org/magic-penny
3. http://journal.childrensmusic.org/pass-it-on/archive/spring-2000
4. http://journal.childrensmusic.org/pass-it-on/archive/winter-2000

Land Acknowledgements and Beyond

by Carrie Ferguson[1] (she/they), with Seal LaMadeleine (she/her) and Noam Brown (he/him)

Much thanks for consulting on this project go to Strong Oak Lefebvre, Ko'asek Traditional Band of Sovereign Abenaki Nation, Executive Director of Visioning B.E.A.R. Circle Intertribal Coalition[2].

> Territory acknowledgement is a way that people insert an awareness of Indigenous presence and land rights in everyday life. This is often done at the beginning of ceremonies, lectures, or any public event. It can be a subtle way to recognize the history of colonialism and a need for change in settler colonial societies. However, these acknowledgements can easily be a token gesture rather than a meaningful practice. All settlers, including recent arrivants, have a responsibility to consider what it means to acknowledge the history and legacy of colonialism.
>
> —Native Land Digital[3]

This article is about my ongoing process of learning how to incorporate land acknowledgments into my work, as a non-Indigenous person of European colonizer descent, and some of the challenges and questions that have come up for me as a performer for family audiences. My hope is that sharing my process here will inspire other non-Indigenous children's performers and educators to utilize land acknowledgments as an educational tool to resist and dismantle white supremacy and as an entry point to allyship with Indigenous Nations.

In the spring of 2021, I made a pact with myself that, going forward, I would try to do a land acknowledgment (or make sure that one was done) at all my shows. A cluster of factors had inspired this decision. In the wake of the murder of George Floyd, I was more aware than ever of white supremacy in this country. Also, our government's continual dedication to climate change denial and to sacrificing the environment for corporate profit was, and still is, terrifying. I had recently read *An Indigenous People's History of the United States* and my eyes had been opened even wider to the fact that I, as a descendant of European settlers, live on stolen land, that the so-called United States consists of stolen land, and that this fact is almost never discussed honestly.

In light of all of this, I was determined to find every way possible to use my work as a musician to help dismantle white supremacy. For me, doing land acknowledgments at every show is just one part of this ongoing commitment. I believe that land acknowledgments, when done effectively, are important because not only do they acknowledge the Indigenous Nations from whom the land was stolen, but they also highlight and celebrate the vibrancy of Indigenous Nations currently. This disrupts the white supremacist mainstream narrative that North American Indigenous cultures are extinct, represented only by stereotypes and racist mascots. Land acknowledgments, at their best, assert a sense of relationship with and responsibility to both Indigenous People and the land itself.

"Land acknowledgments, when done effectively, not only acknowledge the Indigenous Nations from whom the land was stolen, but they also highlight and celebrate the vibrancy of Indigenous Nations currently."

When I first made the commitment to doing land acknowledgments, I felt extremely unprepared. I was aware that land acknowledgments can be performances of optical allyship, and I was clear that I didn't want to say empty words. But I also didn't want to wait until I could do it perfectly. I decided to begin and to commit to the ongoing process of research and learning.

Let me just say here that I am extremely lucky in that I've had a collaborator in this whole project: my partner, Seal LaMadeleine, who is a nature educator. She and I both do research and discuss all the information and issues that come up. When I say "our" and "we" in this article I am referring to the two of us.

In preparing our first land acknowledgment, we consulted information from various Indigenous websites, reflecting on what is considered appropriate and respectful allyship. Here are some of the questions that arose from reading these websites, questions we grapple with every time we write a land acknowledgment:

- How are land acknowledgments tied into environmental justice?
- How do we make sure that our practice of doing land acknowledgments is not just performative? How do we back up our words with personal, ongoing action? What does the process of becoming real allies to Indigenous Nations look like?
- Besides educating our audience about the past, what other resources can we offer?
- How can we focus on positive representations of contemporary Indigenous culture and empowerment?

- How do we communicate the often violent history of a place in an age-appropriate manner, while still being honest?
- What are the origins of land acknowledgments? How do we honor the land?
- What are the complexities of mentioning hard history and then turning around to play goofy, fun music?

Here are some of our reflections and information we have compiled on these questions.

Environmental Justice and Call to Action

Native land theft and subjugation is not a thing of the past. The attempted annihilation of native people, which began with forceful, brutal occupation of their land, was the first of many steps in the systemic racism and white supremacy that founded the United States. This system is still in place and still at work. It is important to be aware of the subtle and overt efforts that are still happening to take away the rights of Indigenous People, their land, and their sovereignty. Development, climate change, water and food insecurity, and pollution all disproportionately affect BIPOC communities. Pipelines, landfills, and uranium mines are often constructed on and devastating to First Nations' lands.

Awareness of this can be brought into a land acknowledgment by speaking about local, regional, or national issues affecting Native rights and Native lands and by giving concrete examples and connection to actions our audience can take. We feel it is important to acknowledge that these issues of environmental justice are human rights issues that affect everyone, whether we are Indigenous or of colonizer descent. We are all deeply dependent on the health of our planet, land, and waters.

> **"These issues of environmental justice are human rights issues that affect everyone, whether we are Indigenous or of colonizer descent."**

We often provide further information at our table on how to get involved in environmental justice issues. Other resources we try to provide include information on Indigenous cultural events; websites and contact information for regional Native Nations; and books, music, or other media by Indigenous artists. There are times when it is not possible to make a thorough land acknowledgment due to time constrictions, so we try to provide this information at our table especially when that is the case.

Personal Commitment

In order for land acknowledgments to be more than just one-off performances, we've realized that they must be accompanied by a commitment to continual learning and intentional action. Here are some of our priorities in this area:

- Self-Education: Read, watch, and listen to Indigenous-made media; research local and national Indigenous history and cultures; learn proper pronunciation of group and place names; learn about contemporary Indigenous organizations, leaders, struggles and campaigns.
- Action: Give money and time, when requested, whenever possible; elevate Indigenous folks, companies, and causes via social media and word of mouth; write letters, sign petitions, make calls; support Land Back efforts (rematriation of the land).

- Build Relationships: Attend Indigenous-led events, demonstrations, and protests; support Indigenous leaders, artists, and scholars; initiate conversations with Indigenous folks; listen to podcasts and music and read books and articles by Indigenous folks. Reflect on motivations for relationship building and come from a place of authentic interest, respect, and commitment.
- Practice Decolonizing Behaviors: Follow Indigenous leadership; be wary of our own and others' white/settler centering; stay open to feedback; avoid appropriation or supporting appropriation of Indigenous symbols, traditions, and so forth.

Developmental Appropriateness

In general, we strive to make our land acknowledgments developmentally digestible for the audience. If I'm performing for an adult audience, my words will be different than when geared towards an audience of children. For an adult audience I would really name the facts and details of land stealing and massacres that occurred, and the violence and environmental injustice against Indigenous communities that is still happening. For an example of a land acknowledgment we gave before a family show at a library, please see the resources at the end of this article.

Honoring the Land

> The land, plants, and animals were here before people. The plants and animals are our teachers, not the other way around. Also, we belong to the land. She is our mother and cannot be owned by anyone. She is her own self. Colonists objectified her and claimed ownership of her. Indigenous People never "owned" her. In that way she could not really be stolen from us. We would never want to "own" her. If we did, we would be like the colonists. She really needs to be shared by all of us in reciprocal relationships as a fully liberated being.
>
> —Strong Oak Lefebvre, Ko'asek Traditional Band of Sovereign Abenaki Nation

Expressing gratitude and awareness for the actual land is a core tenant of land acknowledgment, such as naming the nearby rivers, mountains, and significant places around us. In many Indigenous Nations, an address to the land with gratitude and prayer is held before gatherings. These are the origins of land acknowledgment.

> It is important to note that this kind of acknowledgment is not a new practice developed by colonial institutions. Land acknowledgment is a traditional custom dating back centuries for many Native communities and nations. For non-Indigenous communities, land acknowledgment is a powerful way of showing respect and honoring the Indigenous Peoples of the land on which we work and live. Acknowledgment is a simple way of resisting the erasure of Indigenous histories and working towards honoring and inviting the truth.
>
> —Duwamish Tribe of Seattle, Washington[4]

We feel it is important to be mindful of the historic and sacred origins of land acknowledgments. It is not appropriate for people of colonizer descent to utilize the sacred aspects of an Indigenous custom. However, calling attention with gratitude to the place where we are is a step in decolonizing our mindsets and educating others to expand their visions and gain a deeper respect for the land. Additionally, all people living on Indigenous lands today owe a great debt to the Indigenous communities who survived and kept alive ancient land stewardship practices and wisdom. Everything from life-saving medicines to agricultural methods are traced to Indigenous Nations.

Contradictions

> “Art is an important element of any struggle for justice, and music can be a wonderful and meaningful vehicle to honor that struggle.”

As children’s music performers, how do we grapple with the seeming contradiction between acknowledging the hard truth about things while having goofy fun? Life is complex and we need to be able to hold space (sometimes simultaneously) for the serious and the ridiculous, the painful and the celebratory, the sad and the joyful. Acknowledging the land we’re currently on as being stolen and having a painful and violent history attached to it does not necessarily preclude us from having fun. Making joyful music while keeping in mind the importance of our commitment to the land and the Indigenous People whose land we’re on is an embodiment of these complexities. Art is an important element of any struggle for justice, and music can be a wonderful and meaningful vehicle to honor that struggle.

Each time we do a land acknowledgment in a different area, we need to do the research about that area’s history and the local or regional Indigenous Nations and communities. It is a great way to keep learning! Wherever we are, we always try to make sure that the statement does the following:

- Honors (with correct pronunciation) the Indigenous Nations that occupied and currently occupy the land
- Acknowledges settler theft of the land
- Highlights realities of contemporary Native American communities and celebrates their cultural resiliency and vitality
- Reminds everyone of our connection with and responsibility to the actual land and waters of the region we are in
- Offers a call to action and resources to the listeners

This is an ongoing process and commitment, a continual practice in humility and doing things imperfectly! Reflections and suggestions are welcome. I’d also love to hear what other people are doing regarding land acknowledgments; please let me know at walkingsongs@yahoo.com[5].

We are grateful for the tons of amazing sites, blogs, articles, and podcasts by Native Americans and Indigenous People and organizations. We are indebted to these resources for all the information and thinking above. Some of these are listed below. Also, much thanks to Strong Oak Lefebvre for reviewing this article.

Land Acknowledgment Examples

Land Acknowledgment given before a Grumpytime Club Band family concert[6]
Land Acknowledgment given by Franklin Musica at Fun Fest 2022[7]
https://nolumbekaproject.org/the-story-of-nolumbeka[8]
https://www.duwamishtribe.org[9]

Land Acknowledgment Guides

https://nativegov.org/news/a-guide-to-indigenous-land-acknowledgment[10]
https://nativegov.org/news/beyond-land-acknowledgment-guide[11]

Land Back

https://landback.org/manifesto[12]
https://resourcegeneration.org/land-reparations-indigenous-solidarity-action-guide[13]

Maps/Culture/Information

https://native-land.ca[14]
https://www.afn.ca/honoring-earth[15]
https://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com/2019/03/are-you-planning-to-do-land.html[16]
https://nativegov.org/resources[17]

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1. https://journal.childrensmusic.org/pass-it-on/author/carrie-ferguson
2. https://visioningbear.org
3. https://native-land.ca/resources/territory-acknowledgement
4. https://www.duwamishtribe.org
5. mailto:walkingsongs@yahoo.com
6. https://journal.childrensmusic.org/media/pass-it-on/land-acknowledgements-and-beyond/Land Acknowledgement at Wendell Library, MA 7-17-22.pdf
7. https://journal.childrensmusic.org/media/pass-it-on/land-acknowledgements-and-beyond/Musica Franklin Land Acknowledgement.pdf
8. https://nolumbekaproject.org/the-story-of-nolumbeka
9. https://www.duwamishtribe.org
10. https://nativegov.org/news/a-guide-to-indigenous-land-acknowledgment
11. https://nativegov.org/news/beyond-land-acknowledgment-guide
12. https://landback.org/manifesto
13. https://resourcegeneration.org/land-reparations-indigenous-solidarity-action-guide
14. https://native-land.ca
15. https://www.afn.ca/honoring-earth
16. https://americanindiansinchildrensliterature.blogspot.com/2019/03/are-you-planning-to-do-land.html
17. https://nativegov.org/resources

A Place to Grow

by Evalyn Harper[1]

I wasn't so much drawn to the Children's Music Network as I was born into it. That's definitely dramatic of me to say, but it feels like that sometimes. My parents, CMN members Monty and Lisa Harper, brought me to my first national conference when I was six months old. I was in pre-k the first time I performed at a Round Robin. CMN, and children's music in general, was a constant in my childhood. I know that music has a powerful positive effect on the lives of children because I've watched my father bring joy to children and families at his shows for my entire life.

Growing up with a children's musician for a father didn't just instill a love of music in me, it also introduced me to the power of the library. Every summer we tour libraries across the country as part of their summer reading programs. Although I love helping out with the show, demonstrating sign language for songs like "The Cat Came Back," and manning the CD sales table, it's the librarians I've met and their dedication to their communities that really inspired me. I'm currently pursuing my Bachelor of Arts in English and creative writing with a certificate in event management. After I graduate, I'm planning to pursue my master's in library and information science with a specialization in youth services. Ultimately, I hope to combine my events experience with my MLIS to get a position in youth programming with a public library system.

As I'm sure you all know, libraries aren't just about books. Library programming, such as summer reading, provides important opportunities for children to learn and grow. In my opinion, music is one of the most important outlets for that growth. Children find solace in songs. Much like a library, music is a familiar place that children can return to time and time again. I've seen firsthand the positive impact music can have on children, giving them an outlet for creativity and connection by encouraging, as my father puts it, the "wacky, witty, and way out." That's why, as a youth services librarian, one of my main goals would be to provide quality musical programming to all of the patrons under my care. I would especially love to one day work with organizations like CMN, Collaborative Summer Library Program[2], and the American Library Association[3] to make it even easier for other librarians to do the same, because every child deserves to have the positive power of music in their lives.

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1. https://journal.childrensmusic.org/pass-it-on/author/evalyn-harper
2. https://www.cslpreads.org
3. https://www.ala.org

Otoño (Autumn)

words and music by Flor Bromley
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Flor Bromley has been an active Children's Music Network member since she joined in 2021. In her own words: "I wrote my first song at the age of fourteen. After high school, I went to a performing school in Peru and then moved to New York City to study musical theatre. In 2016 I released my first bilingual family album, *Chiqui Music Boom*, where I mix Latin American rhythms and stories to create a fun show for everyone."

Flor's "Otoño (Autumn)" fits beautifully in our fall issue. Flor tells us, "It was written in part during a preschool music class when we were talking about the seasons, and I would name all the sounds we hear during the fall. We then started to act like leaves, and I found the perfect chorus for this song.

"The chorus goes 'Caen, caen, caen, las hojas caen asi: wee pum! Fall, fall, fall, all the leaves fall like this: wee pum!' So, we pretend to do the movement of falling leaves with our fingers or with our bodies. The song goes on to list all the fun activities to do in the fall and encourages children to be excited about this season. I think as we sing for children, we have the mission to educate them through music and help them understand the big wide world. I love writing songs and performing for children because it brings the most honest and happy version of myself."

Otoño (Autumn)

words and music by Flor Bromley
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Verse

C G F G C G
En el o - toñ - o, las ho - jas caen. When au - tumn comes

F G C G F G
all the leaves fall. It starts get - ting just a lit - tle cold. *(Ay que fri - o!)*

C G F G
El fri - o se_em - pie - za a sen - tir. And the leaves fall.

Chorus

C G F G C
Caen, caen, caen, las ho - jas caen a - sí. Wee! Pum! Fall, fall, fall,

G F G C G
all the leaves fall like this. Wee! Pum! Caen, caen, caen, las ho - jas caen a - sí.

F G C[1, 2.] G F G
Wee! Pum! Fall, fall, fall, all the leaves fall like this: Wee! Pum!

C[3.] *rit.* G F G
El o - toñ - o ha - ce las ho - jas ca - er.

Verse
En el otoño, las hojas caen.
When autumn comes all the leaves fall.
It starts getting just a little cold. (Ay que frio!)
El frío se empieza a sentir,
And the leaves fall.

Chorus
Caen, caen, caen, las hojas caen así. Wee! Pum!
Fall, fall, fall, all the leaves fall like this. Wee! Pum!
Caen, caen, caen, las hojas caen así. Wee! Pum!
Fall, fall, fall, all the leaves fall like this. Wee! Pum!

Del verde al rojo, marrón, naranja.
The leaves change colors, fall all around us.
Pumpkin picking so fun at the farm. (Que divertido!)
El otoño vamos a disfrutar,
Cambia la estación.

Chorus

Chorus, third ending
Caen, caen, caen, las hojas caen así. Wee! Pum!
Fall, fall, fall, all the leaves fall like this. Wee! Pum!
Caen, caen, caen, las hojas caen así. Wee! Pum!
El otoño hace las hojas caer.

Let Your Little Light Shine

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may be used freely

The Children's Music Network recently held a Community Singing Workshop with panelists Joanie Calem, Jane Sapp, and Sally Rogers. The discussion turned to the children's song "This Little Light of Mine" as an example of a song that everyone knows and can sing.

Jane Sapp then shared an oral tradition version of "Let Your Little Light Shine" as a song that everyone can learn easily and instantly sing in community. The concept of Jane's song is similar to "This Little Light of Mine"; however, the history goes deeper.

When we researched "Let Your Little Light Shine," we found that Ted Warmbrand had shared another version called "Shine, Shine, Shine" that he learned from Julia Hickory at a People's Music Network Gathering; Julia learned it from Dr. Ysaye Maria Barnwell at a community singing workshop where recording was prohibited; Dr. Barnwell learned it from Dr. Bernice Johnson Reagon when both sang in Sweet Honey in the Rock.

So, while notating this song is not in the oral tradition, we honor the oral tradition by *not* including chords and letting the reader/singer sing it as they hear it. As Ted Warmbrand said in 2004, "I think it is best to sing this unaccompanied and let the voices guide it. Why? Well, if you're lucky and hear Bernice Johnson Reagon sing it, you may feel it's in a major key. And if you're lucky enough to hear Ysaye Maria Barnwell singing it, you'll hear it in a more minor mode. If you heard a congregation sing it, you might hear both at once. So, I say, let the harmonizers decide; let's let all the little lights shine."

First below is Jane Sapp's version, and second is the version Ted Warmbrand provided, published in *PIO!* Issue #48 in Fall 2004.

Let Your Little Light Shine

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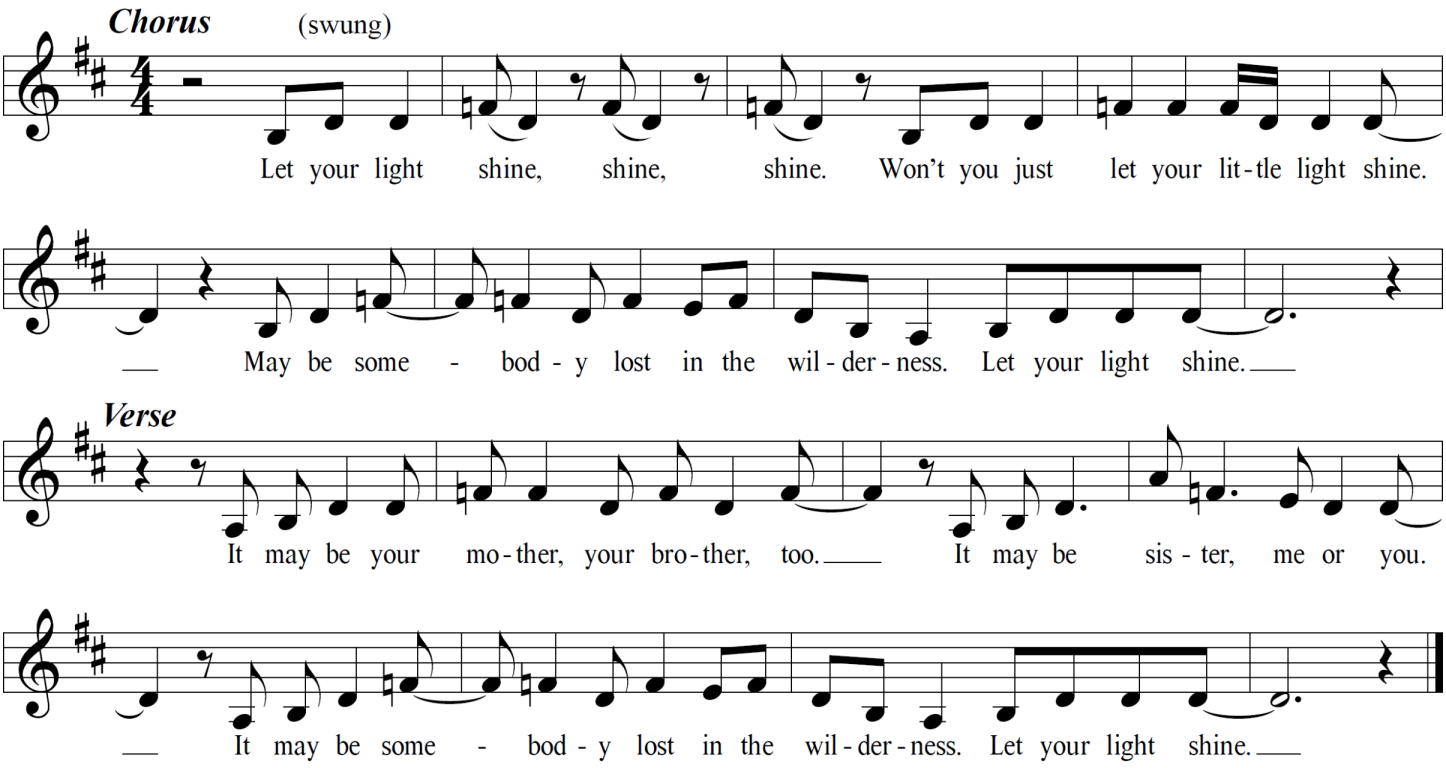
Chorus
(swung)
Let your light shine, shine, shine. Won't you just let your lit-tle light shine.
May be some - bod - y lost in the wil - der - ness. Let your light shine.
Verse
It may be your mo-ther, your bro-ther, too. It may be sis - ter, me or you.
It may be some - bod - y lost in the wil - der - ness. Let your light shine.

Chorus
Let your light shine, shine, shine.
Won't you just let your little light shine.
May be somebody lost in the wilderness.
Let your light shine.

Verse
It may be your mother, your brother, too.
It may be your sister, me or you.
It may be somebody lost in the wilderness.
Let your light shine.

Shine, Shine, Shine

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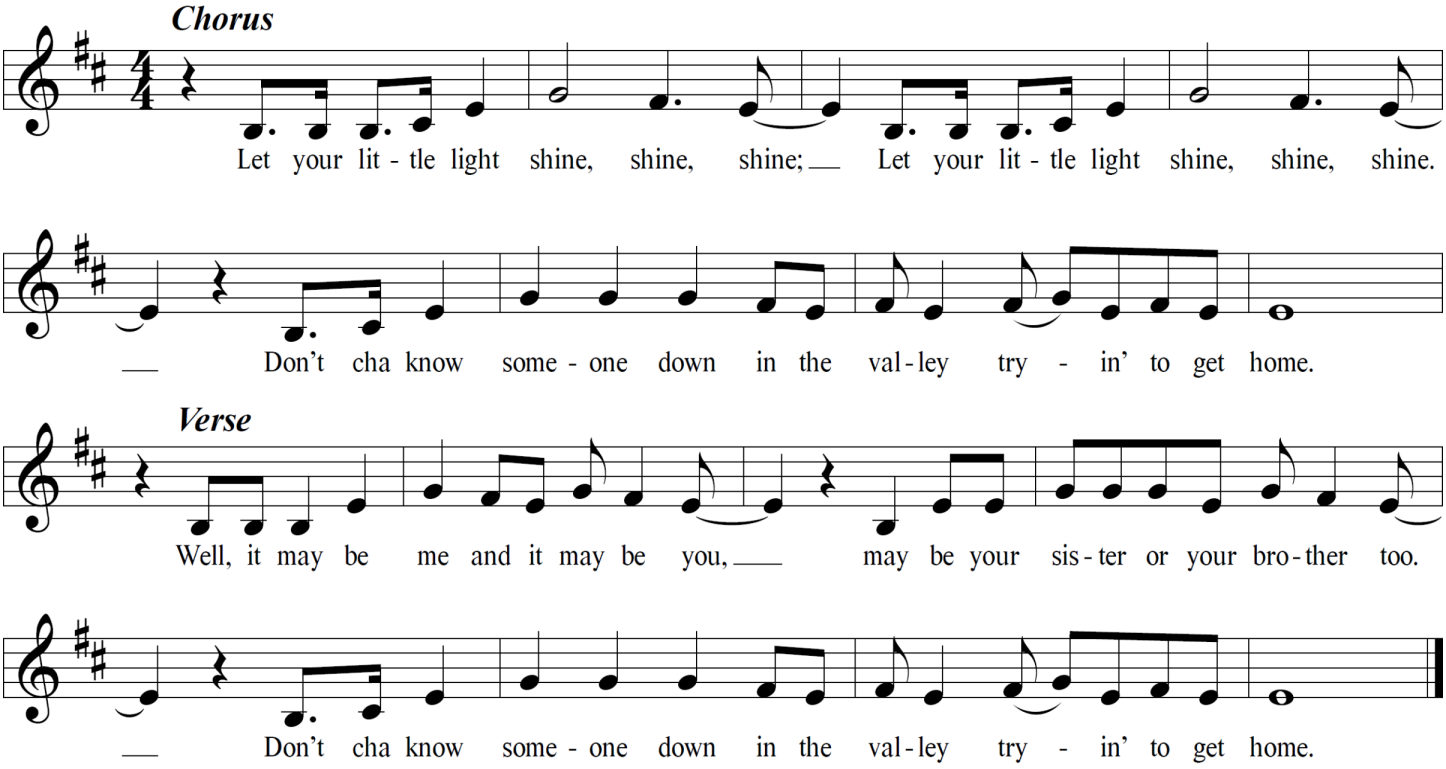

Chorus
Let your lit - tle light shine, shine, shine; Let your lit - tle light shine, shine, shine.
Don't cha know some - one down in the val - ley try - in' to get home.
Verse
Well, it may be me and it may be you, may be your sis - ter or your bro - ther too.
Don't cha know some - one down in the val - ley try - in' to get home.

Chorus
Let your little light shine, shine, shine. (2x)
Don't cha know someone down in the valley tryin' to get home.

Verse
Well, it may be me and it may be you,
May be your sister or your brother too.
Don't cha know someone down in the valley tryin' to get home.

Fall Fun Song

words and music by Loretta Haynes
© 2022 Loretta Haynes

Looking for new fall songs, we asked Loretta Haynes if she had something up her metaphoric sleeve. She responded quickly with two fall songs, and we chose this one to share with you. As a preschool teacher, Loretta feels her songs are designed to help children with "learning, socialization, and language in a fun and creative way." She was inspired by her "love of fall and how it makes [her] feel. We can express fall with the language of colors, changing of the weather, and the wonderful and cool activities that fall brings."

Fall Fun Song

words and music by Loretta Haynes
© 2022 Loretta Haynes

Swung

G G/F♯ G/E G/D G G/F♯ G/E G/D A m A m/F♯

Fall ___ is so won-der-ful. Fall ___ is so beau-ti-ful. Fall ___ seems to

A m/E A m/D G G/F♯ G/E G/D G *(with descending bass)*

talk to you and me. Can't you see? ___ Fall ___ is all a-round.

G A m G

Fall ___ makes a hap-py sound. The fall leaves are do-in' a dance in the cool, cool breeze.

C D G C D G C D

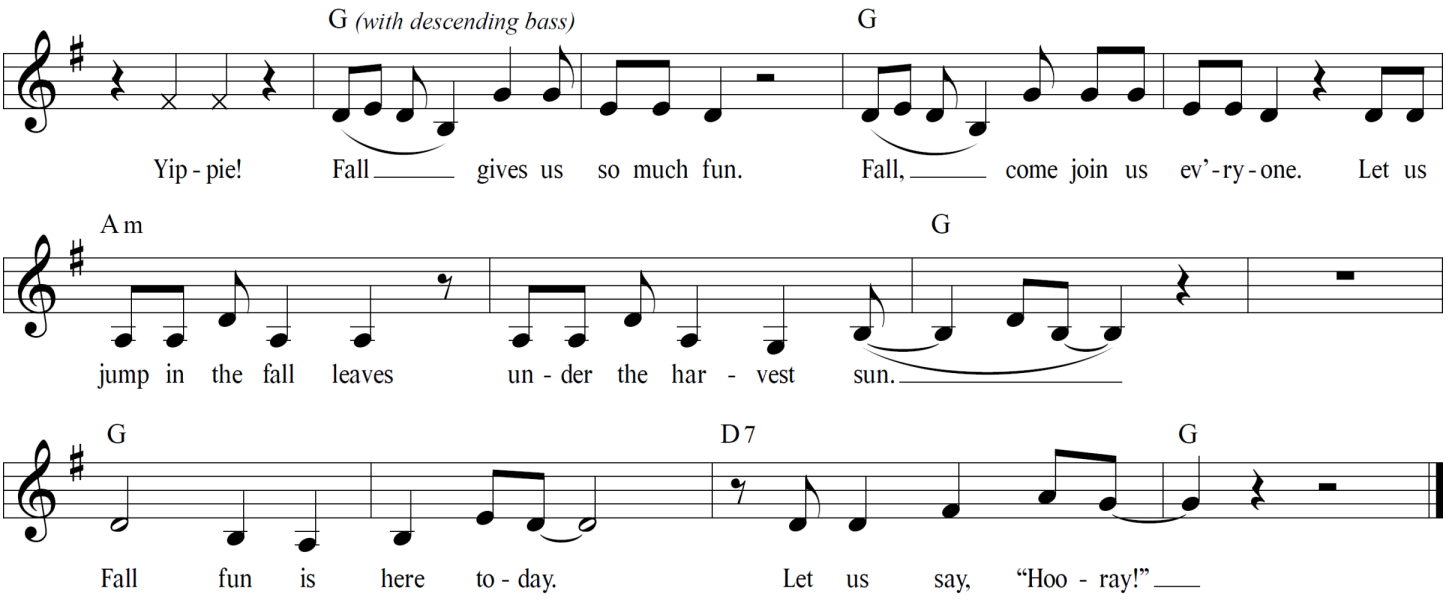
So man-y col - ors chang-ing on the tree. Like a rain - bow

G C A 7 D A m

in the sky the leaves float down like but-ter-flies! But-ter-flies! As the leaves sway

D A m D D

in the wind, that's when the fun be-gins When the leaves fall what a blan-ket of col-ors!


G (with descending bass)
G
Yip - pie! Fall gives us so much fun. Fall, come join us ev'-ry-one. Let us
A m
G
jump in the fall leaves un - der the har - vest sun.
G
D 7
G
Fall fun is here to - day. Let us say, "Hoo - ray!"

Fall is so wonderful.
Fall is so beautiful.
Fall seems to talk to you and me. Can't you see?

Fall is all around.
Fall makes a happy sound.
The fall leaves are doin' a dance in the cool, cool, breeze.

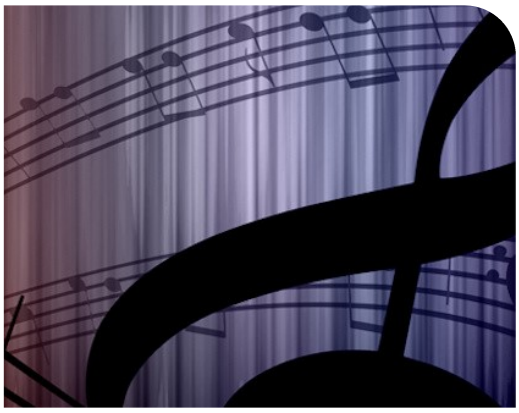
So many colors changing on the tree.
Like a rainbow in the sky,
The leaves fall down like butterflies! Butterflies!

As the leaves sway in the wind,
That's when the fun begins.
When the leaves fall what a blanket of colors.
Yippie!

Fall gives us so much fun.
Fall, come join us everyone.
Let us jump in the fall leaves under the harvest sun.
Fall fun is here today.
Let us say, "Hooray!"

About PIO!

Pass It On! publishes thoughtful, informative articles on children's music, empowering those who teach, write, perform, share, and produce it to strengthen their craft and their advocacy. All articles are open to the public, providing CMN members and the wider community with news about exciting programs, music history, business tips, and in-depth interviews with music legends. Our songs for children —serious and silly, traditional and brand new, for all ages and from all over the world—are meant to be learned and shared.



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How to Submit Something to *Pass It On!*

Articles

Pass It On! always needs stories from members about what they're doing and how they're doing it. If you are a CMN member, you are invited to share your story. After all, that's the whole point of CMN.

Songs

Most of the songs published in *Pass It On!* are contributed by CMN members, and we welcome songs written by people from various parts of the continent or the world. Please share your works with us.

Interested? Read our guidelines for submission[8] to *Pass It On!*

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